

Yesterday, I voted to pass H.R. 3122, the New Direction for Energy Independence, National Security, and Consumer Protection Act. This comprehensive energy legislation provides billions of dollars for research and investment in renewable energy and clean renewable fuel. The bill establishes a “green jobs” training program and grant programs for States and local governments to invest in energy efficiency projects. H.R. 3221 also closes the royalty relief loopholes for oil companies that have not been paying their fair share of taxes for more than 15 years. The bill also adopts new measures to protect precious lands in the West from destructive oil drilling policies. Additionally, this legislation establishes a new Office of Climate Change and an International Clean Energy Foundation to help developing countries from all greenhouse gas emitting countries develop and invest in technologies to reduce emissions.

To further strengthen the bill, I led a bipartisan coalition to help pass the Udall-Platts amendment that requires utility companies to produce at least 15% of their electricity from renewable energy sources by 2020. This will reduce our dependence on foreign oil, cut greenhouse gas emissions by 511 million tons, create hundreds of thousands of jobs and save consumers billions of dollars on their energy bills. This amendment passed by a vote of 220-190.

I wish the House had considered one more amendment. Unfortunately, the Democratic Leadership refused to allow any amendments increasing fuel economy standards to be debated during consideration of this bill. Raising fuel economy standards is critical to our efforts to reduce pollution, gas prices and our dependence on foreign oil. As an original cosponsor of H.R. 1506, the Fuel Economy Reform Act, I will continue to work with Representatives Ed Markey (D-MA) and Todd Platts (R-PA) to ensure that this legislation is not forgotten.

The House also considered H.R. 2776, the Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act of 2007. This legislation eliminates tax loopholes and cuts exorbitant tax credits for big oil companies. H.R. 2776 invests this \$15 billion in revenues in tax credits for renewable energy and fuel production, plug-in hybrid vehicles, and bonds for State and community energy efficiency programs. Both H.R. 3221 and H.R. 2776 passed the House of Representatives late Saturday evening. I am proud to have voted for these bills which will lead us toward a new sustainable energy policy based on domestic production of renewable and alternative energy.